



Prepare to find hope !

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'

(John 1:23 NKJV)

In a world that has lost hope in economics, political leaders, and even the church, a cry for rescue and help rushes to the fore of our minds. But where is the help that will bring what is needed to make things right or even better? From experience we know that unless we do our part to help, not much will change. In fact, things will probably get worse. Yet, hope is not totally lost when it comes to faith. John the Baptist knew that God would send the Messiah. John obeyed God by being the prophetic voice, the one who went ahead of Christ to prepare the people for Christ. In preparing the people, John has a message of repentance: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Mathew 3:2 NKJV)!"

Repentance brings about conversion. Repentance also brings renewal. Without conversion faith is dead (Matthew 18:3), and without renewal, faith has no hope (2 Corinthians 3:18). However, we have been created in time and space and we find it difficult to be renewed by God when the circumstances of life always seem so pressing. Where is hope for the future and what God wants to do in and through you and me? Israel's problem was that they really did not know God or serve him because they were caught up with the things around them. They thought they could gain his favour by returning to their religious ways. But the prophets and John the Baptist came to prepare for "The Way". His message of repentance calls us to engage Christ and be transformed (Romans 12:1-2). As we are being transformed by him day by day, we wait in eager anticipation of his coming again so that our focus is not on the things of this world which will pass away.

Christ has come! Repent and be renewed by the hope we have in Christ's work of salvation. Christ is coming! Prepare and be ready for the fulfillment of salvation in his return! As we wait in expectation, "pray without ceasing . . . be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 23 NKJV)." During these next weeks as we prepare for Christ's first coming to Bethlehem, hear the call of repentance for renewal and hope as we focus on his second coming.